

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 02414 231506Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6388

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 2414

E O 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI PRESS ON PRESIDENT FORD'S TV INTERVIEW

1. SUMMARY: ISRAELI PRESS TAKES GRIM VIEW OF REMARKS MADE BY PRESIDENT FORD IN TV INTERVIEW APR 21. EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES BY WASHINGTON-BASED ISRAELI REPORTERS CONCLUDE THAT PRESIDENT'S REMARKS INDICATE TENSION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND US IS CONTINUING, AND THAT ALLON'S VISIT HAS NOT BROUGHT ABOUT ANY REAL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. HAARETZ EDITORIAL NOTES THAT FORD'S REMARKS MAY SERVE AS AN INDICATOR TO THE MOOD AT ALLON-KISSINGER MEETING: KISSINGER WILL HARDLY HAVE BEEN OVERFLOWING WITH FRIENDSHIP FOR ISRAEL, WHILE THE PRESIDENT WAS DEFINITELY RESERVED, IF NOT EVEN MORE REMOTE THAN BEFORE. UNTIL NOW IT WAS NOT TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT ANY TIME AN ISRELI PM WAS INVITED, ARAB PMS WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE INVITED... FORD HAS TAKEN ...SCRANTON'S "EVENHANDED POLICY OUT OF THE DRAWER AGAIN..." AS FOR FUTURE AMERICAN STEPS, EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT EVEN BASIC QUESTIONS LIKE PLO REPRESENTATION ARE YET TO BE DECIDED AND "THERE IS NO CERTAINTY THAT US POSITION WILL

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 02414 231506Z

REMAIN UNCHANGED..." ONE CAN UNDERSTAND THAT US LEADERSHIP

WANTS TO PREVENT ANOTHER ARAB-ISRAELI WAR, BUT FORD'S STATEMENT MAY WELL HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT... SINCE THE PRESIDENT TAKES THE THREAT OF AN OIL EMBARGO AS A CERTAINTY AND ASSURES THE ARABS THAT THEY NEED NOT... EXPECT US INTERVENTION..."

3. HAARETZ WASHINGTON BASED REPORTER MARGALIT QUOTES "MANY OBSERVERS IN WASHINGTON" AS SAYING THAT FOLLOWING FORD'S INTERVIEW " THE TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IS NOT OVER YET..." IN AN INSIDE PAGE COMMENTARY MARGALIT SAYS THAT " A COLD MAN, WHO IS DEVELOPING A GRUDGE TOWARDS ISRAEL, IS NOW SITTING IN THE WHITE HOUSE... THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW HE DEMONSTRATED HIS COLD SHOULDER TOWARDS ISRAEL... FORD AVOIDED ANY EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY FOR ISRAEL..." AND THIS SHOWS THE " AMOUNT OF ILLUSION WHICH ALLON HAS BEEN NURSING IN HIS ATTEMPT TO 'AGREE WITH EVERYTHING THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED IN PUBLIC.' THIS TIME THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED HIS ANGER WITH ISRAEL NOT ONLY IN DROPPING HINTS..." MARGALIT FINDS FORD'S REFERENCE TO OIL EMBARGO AS "PARTICULARLY GRAVE." IT " GIVES CREDIBILITY TO THE ARAB THREAT TO USE OIL EMBARGO..." ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION MARGALIT CONCLUDES THAT " THE REASSESSMENT WILL EXAMINE THIS PROBLEM ALSO... BUT THE WAY FORD PRESENTED THE SUBJECT--THERE ARE TWO EQUAL SIDES-- ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS-- WHO REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER..."

4. DAVAR WASHINGTON REPORTER (BARNEA) CONCLUDES FROM INTERVIEW THAT "FORD IN EFFECT MADE CLEAR THAT ISRAEL WILL IN FUTURE NOT BE GIVEN PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT... IT IS THOUGHT THAT FORD'S STATEMENTS HAD BEEN PREPARED IN ADVANCE AND REFLECT THE LINE ADOPTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION ACCORDING TO WHICH ... KISSINGER IS 'THE GOOD GUY' WHO EMPHASIZES US COMMITMENT... TO ISRAEL, WHILE FORD IS ' THE BAD GUY' PRESSING FOR MORE 'EVENHANDEDNESS'.... A SIMILAR LINE WAS ADOPTED BY KISSINGER AND NIXON DURING MEIR'S VISIT TO THE US IN NOV 1973..." BARNEA CONCLUDES THAT "IT SEEMS THAT FROM NOW ON THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ADMINISTRATION WILL NO LONGER CENTER ON NEGOTIATION FAILURE BUT ON FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND THE DIPLOMATIC DEADLOCK, WHICH ACCORDING TO THE ADMINISTRATION, ISRAEL'S POLICY HAS CREATED."

5. IN AN INSIDE PAGE COMMENTARY DAVAR (BARNEA) INTERPRETS UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 02414 231506Z

FORD'S INTERVIEW AS "A BITTER EPILOGUE TO ALLON'S TRIP... EVEN IF ONE HAS TO ATTRIBUTE THE FORMULATION OF WHAT HE SAID... TO THE PRESIDENT'S LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN POLICY..., THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT WHAT FORD SAID EXPRESSED THE POSITION OF THE ADMINISTRATION TOWARDS ISRAEL AT THE PRESENT STAGE: AS LONG AS THE REASSESSMENT PROCESS CONTINUES, NO COMMITMENT OF POLICY OR AID MUST BE MADE--ONE MUST CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT WHAT ISRAEL HAS FORFEITED BECAUSE OF HER REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE

EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL, WAS... THE AMERICAN CONCEPTION THAT THE INTERESTS OF ISRAEL ARE TO BE PREFERRED TO THOSE OF HER NEIGHBORS..."

6. HATZOFE EDITORIAL WRITES THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENT ABOUT US EVEN-HANDED POLICY INDICATES SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IN THE USG'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ISRAEL, EVEN IF OFFICIALLY THE 'REASSESSMENT' WILL END ONLY BY THE END OF THE MONTH... THE CHANGE THAT HAS OCCURRED IN THE US IS REGRETTABLE..."

7. YEDIOT (GUNEY) NOTES THAT " IT SEEMS THAT WE ARE BACK TO THE FIRST DAYS OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION WHEN GOVERNOR SCRANTON SHOCKED ISRAEL... BY DECLARING THAT 'AMERICAN POLICY MUST BE MORE EVEN-HANDED.'... " FROM THE REMARK MADE BY THE PRESIDENT THAT LEADERS OF ARAB COUNTRIES WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE INVITED IF RABIN IS INVITED TO WASHINGTON, GUNEY CONCLUDES THAT IT REFLECTS A DESIRE (ON THE PART OF THE AMERICANS) "NOT TO APPEAR IN GENEVA AS THE SOLE DEFENDER OF ISRAEL AND LET THE SOVIETS HAVE ALL THE ADVANTAGES ... OF DEFENDING THE ARAB CONCEPTION.." GUNEY SUMS UP THE INTERVIEW AS "CAUSING ANXIETY." HE ADDS THAT DIFFERENCES OF VIEWS ARE DEEP AND JUST GOOD-WILL... WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO BRIDGE THE GAP..."

7. MAARIV (ZAK) DESCRIBES FORD'S INTERVIEW AS " A COLD SHOWER FOR ISRAEL. FOR THE FIRST TIME, A US PRESIDENT DREW A PARALLEL BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PLO. PUTTING BOTH ON THE SAME LEVEL IS MORE OMINOUS THAN ANYTHING THE US ADMINISTRATION HAS YET SAID ON THE SUBJECT. AND THAT WAS ONLY ONE INDICATION OF EVEN-HANDEDNESS.." VELIOES

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